



In the Matter of Cedric Belfrage

William Hogan

ON APRIL 15 Bobbs-Merrill will publish what could be an extremely interesting, if possibly a minority view of recent history, "The American Inquisition, 1945-1960."

This is an account of the McCarthy era, but not simply a discussion of the late Senator from Wisconsin. It traces political smear techniques which really became effective in the 1930s, and investigates the "inquisitors" who ruined the reputations of hundreds of Americans and helped to change America and the world in the post-war period.

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THE AUTHOR is Cedric Belfrage, now 68, a British subject who came to the United States in the 1920s but never applied for citizenship. Belfrage co-founded the left-wing paper National Guardian in 1948 and edited it until his deportation to Britain in 1955. As a deportee he may not re-enter this country until authorities in Washington will waive the immigration law "exclusion clause." Belfrage apparently is still a victim of what he calls the American "inquisition."

I am in receipt of a letter he sent from his present base in Cuernavaca, Mexico. His publishers, he writes, have invited him to be in New York at publication date of his book. Also, he adds, he has been asked to speak on the subject of the book at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, at Stanford, Amherst, M.I.T., Wes-

elyan, Northwestern, the Universities of California (Berkeley), Illinois, Chicago, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oregon State and California State (Chico) among other campuses.

Belfrage applied for a visa to fulfill some of these dates in April. The U.S. Consul who interviewed him ("on the basis of a three-inch thick dossier") said he would try to get an answer by the end of March. Belfrage thinks this is unlikely if governmental inertia is allowed to rule the day.

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IF SO, this suggests to me some heavy-footed marching on the bureaucratic treadmill. In an age when the veteran American Marxist editor Al Richmond publishes a well-received political autobiography with a conservative Boston house; when an American President is greeted with open arms in Peking; when a thaw in relations between the U.S. and China and the U.S. and the Soviet Union is unquestioned, an international scholar is barred from this country because he once disagreed (perhaps still does) with basic American policy — this is nonsense.

As one who believes in the American tradition of free exchange of ideas, I am writing to the U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of State asking that Belfrage be allowed his brief visit here in the interests of his book, and in the interest of our own dignity.